

**Appropriations Committee
Tuesday, February 22, 2022**

**House Bill 5128: AN ACT CONCERNING THE TASK FORCE ESTABLISHED TO EVALUATE
WHETHER TO ESTABLISH A POST-SECONDARY PRISON EDUCATION OFFICE**

Senator Slap, Representative Elliott, Senator Witkos, Representative Haines, and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee:

My name is Jennifer Corti and I am a state school teacher in Unified School #1 (USD #1), the school district within the Department of Correction (DOC). I am also a union steward for the members of the Education Professionals (P-3B) bargaining unit and a proud member of CSEA SEIU Local 2001. I offer the following testimony on House Bill 5128: AN ACT CONCERNING THE TASK FORCE ESTABLISHED TO EVALUATE WHETHER TO ESTABLISH A POST-SECONDARY PRISON EDUCATION OFFICE:

This testimony is for the purposes of including the P-3B employees of USD #1, as members of the task force mentioned in this bill. P3B employees of USD #1 include all certified professionals and support staff that educate those students within the prison system.

Currently, these employees have first hand knowledge and experience in what is being proposed for the study and examination of this bill. These employees would be an appropriate stakeholder to have on the task force due to the following reasons:

- P3B members already offer post-secondary classes to students through UConn's Early College Experience (ECE) program at Manson Youth Institution. Members can provide insight and guidance about strengths, weaknesses, and obstacles of implementing post-secondary programs within the prison;
- Unified School District #1 creates and implements all educational programs including but not limited to vocational programs, credit offerings, pathways to graduation, and UConn Early College Experience courses. (Examinations #1 & #2);
- P3B members can discuss the strengths and weaknesses of a virtual platform, specifically those who teach at Manson Youth that are currently using a virtual platform to augment in-person learning. (Examination #3);
- P3B members currently take requests for program enrollment, drop requests, and educational concerns for the variety of educational programs offered by USD #1. (Examination #4);
- P3B members design, and approve curriculum for Unified School District #1, utilizing committees and examining appropriate resources, technologies, and media that can be used to supplement the curriculum.

(Examination #5);

- USD #1 participates in the Connecticut Competency System (CCS) through the implementation of the CASAS curriculum. This curriculum and assessment participates with the state's workforce and employment longitudinal data system, by meeting all Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Department of Labor requirements, as well as utilizes the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) competencies. Unified School District #1 is also a legally vested school district in the State of Connecticut. (Examination #6);
- USD #1 can discuss and share what space they currently use within each correctional facility. (Examination #7)

After analyzing the examination points of the proposed study, it is clear that P-3B members should be appointed to this task force. Our recommendation is to include four (4) appointees, USD #1's Acting Superintendent, one (1) State School Teacher, one (1) Vocational Correction Instructor, and one (1) Pupil Service Specialist, as representatives. These positions are the front-line stakeholders that can provide value, insight, and experience in regards to the nine (9) examination points in House Bill 5128.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Corti
State School Teacher and P-3B Steward